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Subject: saltwater leak in North Dakota

This was in Friday's BNA report. Never mind if you already have this.

Water Pollution
Pipeline Leak Discharges 1 Million Gallons
Of Saltwater in Northwest North Dakota

By *Mark Wolski*

July 10 — A pipeline leak near Mandaree, N.D., discharged about 1 million gallons of saltwater into the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation before being contained July 9.

While the state believes part of the spill has reached Bear Den Bay, which leads into Lake Sakakawea on the Missouri River, the owner of the pipeline, Crestwood Midstream Services, said in a statement that it doesn't believe the spill has affected the lake. Crestwood, which is based in Houston, said sampling, visual inspection and other independent testing indicate the lake is unaffected thus far.

Carl Rockeman, director of the water quality division of the North Dakota Department of Health, told Bloomberg BNA July 10 that saltwater spills can be difficult to

remediate. Because of the salinity of the water and its effect on vegetation, remediation could take years, he said.

According to Crestwood's statement, the leak in the saltwater pipeline probably began over the July 4 weekend. When the company noticed a reduction in the volume of flow in its daily volume reports, it began looking for an explanation. The leak was discovered July 8.

No Monitoring System in Place

The company said it acquired the pipeline late last year. While it has made installing remote monitoring systems on its pipelines a priority, the pipeline which leaked didn't have such a monitoring system in place, it said.

Rockeman said northwest North Dakota holds a number of pipelines, some carrying oil, some carrying natural gas, and some carrying the waste saltwater that results from the oil drilling process.

He said the oil that is drilled comes from formations that were once at the bottom of oceans. When the oil is brought to the surface, the residual saltwater comes with it, he said.

He said the saltwater that comes to the surface is as much as 10 times to 30 times as salty as sea water.

Typically, he said, a gallon of the water will hold about two pounds of salt.

The saltwater pipelines in North Dakota take the water generated from drilling to an underground disposal well, he said, where it is pumped back below ground.

Tribes, EPA to Take Lead

Rockeman said the state won't be taking the lead role in directing remediation. Because the leak occurred on the Three Affiliated Tribes Reservation, the tribes and the Environmental Protection Agency will direct cleanup efforts, he said. He said he expects them to ask Crestwood to develop a remediation plan for the area and then offer their input.

He said it also will be up to the tribes and the EPA to determine whether Crestwood must take action beyond remediation and whether the company must pay a penalty for the spill.

Calls to EPA Region 8 in Denver weren't immediately returned.

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